

WUSA

WUSA is a major television network that owns local stations or has local affiliates in over 95% of the top 50 media markets in the United States and with bureaus in 12 foreign capitals. It prides itself on its international coverage and its emphasis on financial news. The news division is headed by a former journalist for the Wall Street Journal, later an Assistant to the White House Press Secretary in the Reagan Administration and Director of Public Communication for the World Bank during the 1990s.

WUSA is owned by Chic Duds International, a company that produces athletic shoes and apparel aimed at an international youth market. Two high ranking CDI officers serve on its board of directors. CDI disclaims any attempt to influence the day to day operations of the network but Board members regularly review its coverage with the head of the network and relevant colleagues to "see how it might be improved."

WUSA's corporate motto is: "Fair and Balanced Coverage. We Tell It Like It Is."

Frame

UNFETTERED MARKETS (see Resource Kit)

Access

The following teams have automatic access: **WTO, U.S. State Dept.** Other teams require your permission to meet with you.

Success Indicators:

Elite Credibility (EC): This begins at 100 and is raised by actions that enhance the respect of the State Department, the A-Team, WTO, European Union, the Progressive Caucus and major corporations for WUSA and is lowered by actions that decrease the respect of these teams.

Popular Credibility (PC): This begins at 100 and is raised by actions that enhance the respect of other teams for WUSA and is lowered by actions that decrease the respect of other teams.

$$\text{Overall Success} = (2\text{EC} + \text{PC}) / 3$$

Recommended to Print from Resource Kit:

- *** Glossary of Technical Terms
- *** UNFETTERED MARKETS Frame.
- *** TRIP (Trade-Related Intellectual Property) Agreements.

Visual Materials

Visual images for each case are posted. You should print these if possible and bring them to the session.

Notes:

WUSA is not based on any particular television network in the United States but borrows elements from several of them. David Croteau and William Hoynes (2001) *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest* (Thousand Oaks, CA: The Pine Forge Press) is an excellent source on the media business and how it affects political reporting. WUSA is inspired by many of the examples it contains.

*** Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns the Fox Network. As Croteau and Hoynes write, Rupert Murdoch has come to symbolize the potential threat of flagrant abuse of media power to influence the political process. They quote one profile of him (p. 199): "He wields his media as instruments of influence with politicians who can aid him, and savages his competitors in his news columns." They go on to describe a series of specific instances in which he used his media holdings "to advocate his conservative views and to promote or punish politicians."

*** News networks are typically owned by other businesses whose success may be influenced by media coverage. In 1998, for example, one of News Corp.'s publishing companies, Harper-Collins, dropped plans to publish a memoir by Chris Patten, the last English governor of Hong Kong. As Croteau and Hoynes describe the incident (p. 174), "Harper-Collins' top editor, Stuart Proffitt, described the book as 'the most lucid and intelligent' he had ever read by a politician and he felt sure it would be a bestseller. However, News Corp. was attempting to expand its global satellite TV empire into China and Patten's book criticized the Chinese government, potentially causing problems for News Corp.'s profitable plans. The head of News Corp., Rupert Murdoch, ordered Proffitt to tell Patten his book was not acceptable. Proffitt refused and was then suspended from his job."

*** It is not far-fetched that an apparel company such as Chic Duds would own a television network. The Disney company, which like Chic Duds, builds and operates theme parks, owns ABC. General Electric, which manufactures appliances and builds nuclear reactors, owns NBC. There is no inherent connection between the product or services on which a business is originally built and its ownership of media companies.

WUSA Action Options

*** Review the case and plan your strategy of coverage during Phase One.

*** Observe and interview other relevant players during Phase Two.

*** During Phase Three, if you are permitted to observe one or more teams, you may send representatives to do so. You are not allowed to ask questions during this phase. Others on your team who are not observing may begin the preparation of your broadcast.

*** During Phase Four, there will be a press conference and you will receive press releases from the other non-journalist teams.

*** During the break between Phase Four and Phase Five, you should prepare your broadcast, for presentation during Phase Five. Treat this broadcast as a five minute presentation for a news of the week in review show. In preparing your broadcast, assume that it is a television presentation and you will need to describe the video portions of the broadcast as well as audio. In preparation for your broadcast, you should answer the following questions:

1. What information will you emphasize in the lead or opening paragraph?

2. What background information will you want to include?

3. Your portfolio includes visual materials provided below. Which items will you include in your broadcast?

4. What title will you use for your broadcast? (The title should be catchy and reflect the central theme and reflect your framing of events.)

WUSA Broadcast Rating Form

In each case, there is a third non-mainstream journalist team. The success of this team rests in part on their credibility with the mainstream press. Hence, you are asked to rate the broadcast of this “alternative” journalist team.

Team _____

Notes on coverage:

1. To what extent did the alternative press team meet good journalistic standards for news coverage.

___ 1a. Generally pretty well. Did not make factual errors or present material in a distorted and misleading way.

___ 1b. Mixed. Some errors or distortions but not major ones.

___ 1c. Poorly. Presented material selectively and in a misleading way.